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BEFORE THE
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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DOCKET SECTION

In the matter of

Aviation Security:
Passenger Manifest Information

Docket 47383

COMMENTS OF ROYAL AIR MAROC

Communications with respect to this document should be addressed to:

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February 20, 1990

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COMMENTS OF ROYAL AIR MAROC

Royal Air Maroc (RAM) is the flag carrier of Morocco. It currently operates service between Morocco and the United States pursuant to a foreign air carrier permit issued by the Department in accordance with the Air Transport Agreement between the United States and Morocco. In response to the request for comments contained in the Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), published in the Federal Register on January 31, 1991 (56 Fed. Reg. 3810) RAM hereby states its strong objection to any requirement that it comply with passenger manifest requirements.

It is RAM's understanding that the specific passenger manifest requirements which the Department is considering would, if implemented, require carriers to obtain each passenger's full name, passport number, and the name and telephone number of a contact for each passenger. As a threshold matter, the Department should be aware that the laws of Morocco restrict RAM's ability to collect and transmit this type of data. More specifically, under Moroccan law PAM does not have the legal right to require that its passengers supply the requested information. Furthermore, even if PAM were to obtain the information, the penal laws of Morocco would restrict its ability to release that information. Accordingly, Moroccan law would most probably make it impossible for PAM to comply should the Department adopt a broad passenger manifest regulation which was applicable to foreign carriers.*/

PAM further submits that practical, as well as legal, constraints would hinder its ability to comply fully should the Department determine to make the proposed passenger manifest requirements applicable to foreign air carriers. The type of information which is the subject of the ANPRM would generally be obtained pursuant to telephone conversations between PAM reservations staff and individual passengers or their travel

*/ On a related matter, if PAM were to be subjected to this requirement as a condition to its Morocco-U.S. operations, its ability to operate pursuant to the bilateral agreement between the countries would be impaired.

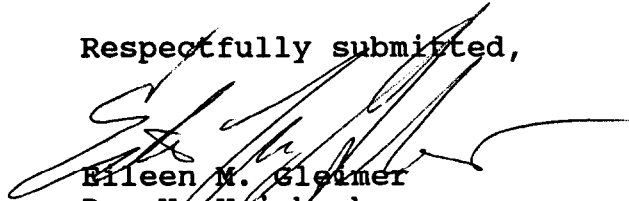
agents. At best, telephonic transmission of information provides less than 100% accuracy. In this connection, RAM is concerned that if the scope of the information now required is expanded to include passport number, emergency contact and a telephone number for the emergency contact -- a considerable increase in the amount of information now required -- the existing level of transmission errors would increase exponentially.

Under these circumstances, the only way to ensure accuracy would be to verify the required information when each passenger checks in at the airport ticket counter immediately prior to departure. Given that RAM's U.S. service is operated with B-747 aircraft which carry over 400 passengers, such a verification requirement would impose an impossible burden on RAM's New York check-in staff. The burden would be even greater if, as is probable, the required information is missing or incomplete for some portion of the passengers arriving at the check-in counter. In any event, the additional processing time necessary to record and verify the additional information would increase delays and crowding at already overtaxed international airports such as JFK.

For the reasons discussed above, Royal Air Maroc respectfully requests the Department of Transportation to refrain from applying any additional passenger manifest requirements to

foreign air carriers such as Royal Air Maroc.

Respectfully submitted,



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